

# Who is Bread for the World?

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. By changing policies, programs and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist, we provide help and opportunity far beyond the communities where we live.

God's grace in Jesus Christ moves us to help our neighbors, whether they live in the next house, the next state or the next continent. Food is a basic need, and it is unjust that so many people must go without enough to eat. We can end hunger in our time. Everyone, including our government, must do their part. With the stroke of a pen, policies are made that redirect millions of dollars and affect millions of lives. By making our voices heard in Congress, we make our nation's laws more fair and compassionate to people in need.

# What is an Offering of Letters?

Bread for the World members write personal letters and emails to Congress. Working through our churches, campuses, and other organizations, we engage more people in advocacy. Each year, Bread for the World invites churches and groups across the country to take up a nationwide Offering of Letters to Congress on an issue that is important to hungry people. People place these letters in the offering plates during church services, prayerfully offering them to God before sending them to Congress.

The Offering of Letters enables individuals to see their concerns translated into policies that help hungry and poor people improve their lives. For many of these letter-writers, it is their first time communicating with their members of Congress. This outpouring of concern sends a powerful message to our country's political leaders and helps us as a nation move closer to our goal of ending hunger.

## In Congress, Handwritten Letters Get Attention!

Research by the Congressional Management Foundation confirms that advocacy does make a difference. Virtually all the Capitol Hill staff surveyed (96 percent) reported that if their member of Congress had not reached a firm decision on an issue, individualized letters would influence the member's position. The 2005 study also found that handwritten, mailed letters are still the best way to communicate with your members of Congress.

During Lobby Day 2008, Carol Kreamer and her granddaughter, Celia, visited Sen. Claire McCaskill's office (D-MO) where they delivered 275 handwritten letters, and then another 233 letters to Sen. Christopher Bond's (R-MO) office. The letters were written by United Methodist Church members from across Missouri.



Jay Mallin



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Offering of Letters Sign-in Sheet
Offering of Letters Order Form
Bread for the World Membership Brochure

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# Offering of Letters Interactive

Check out **Offering of Letters Interactive**, a new online companion to your Offering of Letters kit. You'll find the latest hunger facts and figures, sample letters, stories, and strategies to help prepare for your Offering.

**Watch extended interviews** from the 2009 Offering of Letters video. **Listen to personal stories** from the communities touched by your work. **Visit cities, towns, and villages** around the world through the eyes of our award-winning photographers.

**Get information about activities** across the country and in your community.

**Connect with Bread members online** and stay connected by getting together in person. At **Offering of Letters Interactive**, you'll find a calendar of local Offering workshops. **Attend a gathering of Bread members** or help reach new communities by hosting an event, large or small, of your own.



After your event, share your photos, memories, and inspiration. **Offering of Letters Interactive is a place to find resources, share experiences, inspire and be inspired** by the good work of our community. By reflecting and sharing with others, your Offering will be a springboard to motivate others to be a voice for hungry people.

**Visit [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009) to connect.**

"As people of God, we are encouraged to show love and concern for the widow and the orphan. We are also encouraged to be good stewards of the resources God has graciously given us. Bread for the World's 2009 Offering of Letters affords us the opportunity to do both by using our foreign aid resources wisely and efficiently, thus helping more people to lift themselves out of hunger and poverty."

– Rev. Ervin Sims, Jr.  
Pastor, Mt. Carmel Church of God in Christ, Inc.  
Kansas City, KS

## Welcome to Bread for the World's 2009 Offering of Letters Kit!

This comprehensive resource and its companion Web site, [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009), can help you engage your congregation in this important letter-writing campaign to rework foreign assistance to make it more effective in reducing poverty.

We invite you to explore what's inside.

- **Be sure to look in the front pocket.** This year, you will find a variety of helpful resources there, including a DVD, a poster to advertise your Offering date and time, new bulletin inserts in English and Spanish, and more information about Bread for the World membership.
- **Use the sample letter on page 22, which can be written in two minutes.** Although longer letters can be more effective, people can write a personal letter to their senators and representative in just two minutes or less. Check [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009) before your Offering for the latest sample letter.
- **Don't forget to tally your letters, complete the feedback tear-out form at the end of this handbook, and mail it to us.** You can also fill out the form online at [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009). Reporting accurate letter tallies helps us to be a more effective voice on Capitol Hill.
- **Bread is celebrating a birthday! See page 30 for more information about our 35th anniversary and Bread for the World's Gathering 2009 in Washington, DC, June 14-16.**

**Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of hungry and poor people.**



**breadfortheworld**  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

## **Credo**

We are moved by God's grace in Jesus Christ  
To work for justice for hungry people.  
They may be in the next house. Or in the next country.  
No matter where they live, they are our neighbors.  
And we have the power to help.

Charity alone is not enough.  
We must urge our government to make fair decisions  
So struggling families can provide for their children.

We must write personal letters and emails to Congress  
And engage our churches, campuses, and other organizations.  
We must change laws and structures that allow poverty to persist.

When we turn our faith into action, God uses our voices.  
Again and again, we win help and opportunity.  
Two fish become many.  
Five loaves become enough to feed a multitude.

God is moving in our time  
To end hunger,  
And we are part of this great liberation.

It is our mission to help our neighbors. Wherever they live.  
They are hungry.  
And we are Bread for the World.

# What Is This Offering Of Letters About?



Richard Leonardi

Pedro and Concepción Granada and their children live and farm in the Nicaraguan highlands. Read their story on page 8.

“The universal Christian symbol is the cross, a transcendent fixture that stands with both a vertical and a horizontal element. Bread for the World’s 2009 Offering of Letters reconciles both elements where our commitment to God, the vertical, shines with our care for the poor and the hungry, the horizontal. Via these letters, our national elected officials will understand the moral imperative to alleviate poverty and hunger. They will join with the faith community in fortifying the greatest of all wars in our generation, the war against apathy, injustice, and poverty. Let us pray that the 2009 Offering of Letters will fortify a cross with the complete message of our Lord, bringing Good News to the poor.”

– Rev. Samuel Rodriguez  
President  
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

# What Bread Hopes to Achieve in 2009

The world has changed dramatically in the last 50 years. But the way our country delivers assistance to the world's poorest nations is still being driven by the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act. In 2009, Bread for the World members will urge Congress to rework U.S. foreign assistance to make it more effective in reducing poverty.



The opportunities and challenges we now face argue for a fresh approach to global development. By refocusing and streamlining our aid, and eliminating long-standing inefficiencies, we could increase U.S. assistance to poor and hungry people around the world, even in a time of fiscal constraints. The reform will improve U.S. support for progress against global poverty for years to come.

In 2009, a new president and a new Congress present a rare opportunity to make U.S. foreign assistance more effective and in the process improve America's standing with other countries. U.S. assistance has helped to reduce child deaths, increase school enrollment, and curtail the incidence of AIDS. But more lives can be saved if foreign aid is fixed. Fewer children will die of hunger. Parents will be able to feed their families in the years to come. Better foreign assistance also means less waste and more impact for our tax dollars.

Currently our government's global development policies and programs are scattered across 12 departments, 25 different agencies, and nearly 60 government offices. A more efficient foreign assistance system—with better coordination, better accountability, better clarity—means that people get help faster and more effectively.

We want the United States to be a leader in creating a better, safer world. To do that, U.S. foreign policy must elevate global development so that it plays a more prominent role alongside defense and diplomacy in our foreign policy.

We are asking Congress to pass legislation that strengthens the ability of the United States to promote global development, foster economic growth in low-income countries, and support the efforts of poor people to lift themselves out of hunger and poverty and become self-sufficient.

We will urge a new Congress and administration to elevate global development as a priority of U.S. foreign policy in order to restore America's role in the world and strengthen U.S. national security. We will call on Congress and the administration to chart a new course for U.S. foreign assistance that embraces the following principles:

- Make poverty reduction a primary goal of U.S. foreign assistance.
- Develop a national strategy for global development with coordination at the highest levels of government.
- Provide reliable, flexible assistance in partnership with recipient countries to meet their long-term development goals.
- Provide opportunities for these partner countries and communities to participate in the development of priorities and programs of assistance.

U.S. development assistance reaches people in need in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

- Focus assistance on outcomes, with measurable goals and objectives, including systems of accountability to Congress and the American people.
- Align U.S. aid, trade, migration, energy, and environmental policies so they work together to promote sustainable global development that reduces poverty.
- More closely coordinate with other international donors to reduce program duplication and the burdens on recipient governments.

The effort to reform foreign assistance will likely take more than a year to complete. But in order to get the United States on the right track, we need to get started in 2009. Here are some benchmarks along the way that would show we're making progress. At least some of these should be completed by the end of 2009.

- Congressional hearings on approaches to foreign aid reform
- Appointment of a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) administrator who shares some or all of Bread for the World's goals and principles
- A sign-on letter circulating in Congress that embraces most or all of Bread for the World's principles
- A presidential directive that mandates better coordination of U.S. foreign assistance and elevates attention to development in foreign policy decision-making
- Introduction of a bipartisan congressional resolution in support of Bread for the World goals and principles
- Substantive conversations (e.g., principles, structures, budgets, staffing) between the administration and Congress about new approaches to foreign aid and global development
- Appointment of a person or high-level group to formulate a national strategy for global development and/or foreign assistance
- House and Senate coordination and cooperation to write a new Foreign Assistance Act
- Introduction of legislation in both houses of Congress that represents an emerging consensus on a fresh approach to global development and U.S. foreign assistance
- Passage of legislation that charts a new course for global development and U.S. foreign assistance

As Christians, we know that peace is more than the absence of war. It requires building strong, healthy relationships, supporting people and communities who are working hard to provide a better life for their children, and removing the barriers to human dignity and fulfillment. That's the work of U.S. foreign assistance and the goal of global development. That's our opportunity and our challenge.

To learn more about the life-saving difference that effective development assistance can make, read on...



Ethiopian women like these lined up daily in 2008 to receive food assistance from abroad, a year when the jump in food prices stretched their limits to feed their children.

The following stories show how U.S. foreign assistance works—and how it could work even more effectively with these principles of reform (*in italics*). Your Offering of Letters can help make these principles a part of U.S. foreign policy.

## Where Worms Can Lead

*Poverty reduction should be a primary goal of U.S. foreign assistance. To identify priorities and long-term goals, we consult with local communities, in-country organizations, and people living in poverty themselves.*

MATAGALPA PROVINCE, NICARAGUA — On a mountain-side in the Nicaraguan highlands, farmer Pedro Granada is counting on worms to help his young children make it through school and on to university. That's an impressive goal for a man who just completed first grade himself a few years ago, at the age of 30.

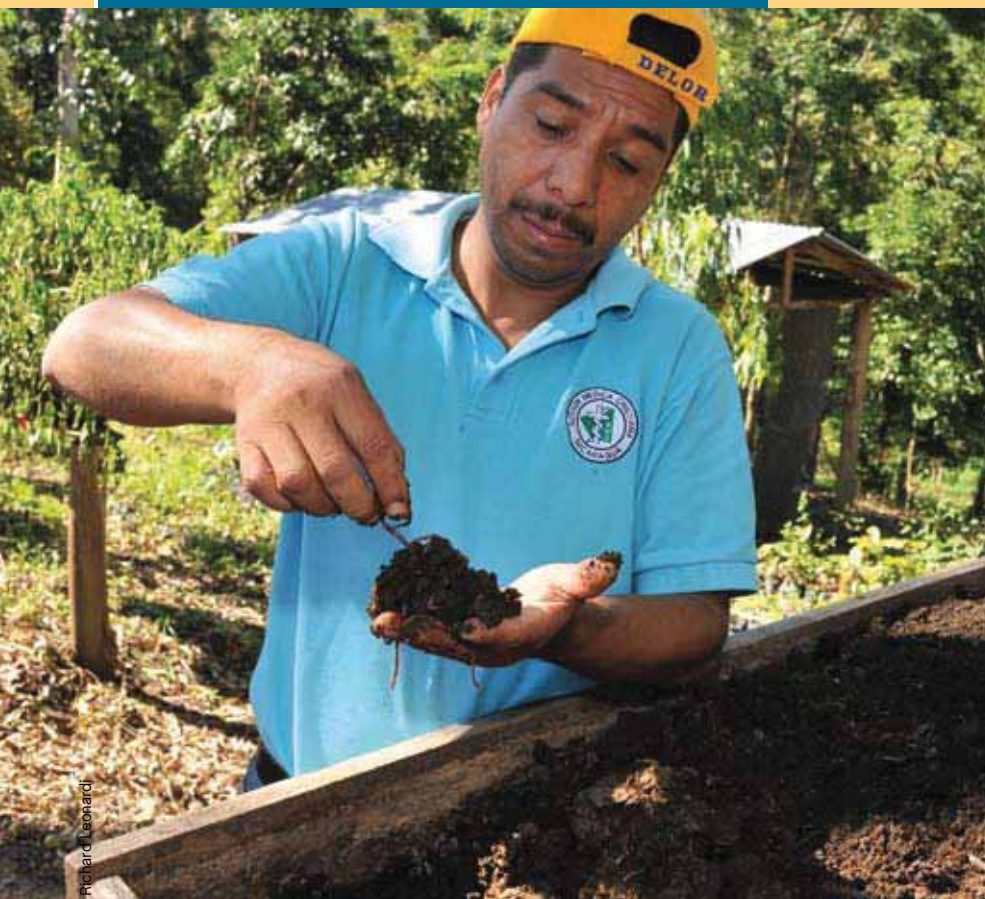
Pedro grew up in the 1980s, when Nicaragua was embroiled in a bloody civil war. The war disrupted life for everyone, including children. He never even got the opportunity to begin primary school.

Not surprisingly, this has made his life a struggle. But he is determined that things will be different for his children.

Pedro and his wife, Concepción, moved with their three children to this community of Aguas Amarillas a year ago. They've built a two-room house and small *finca* (farm) on land provided by *Acción Médica Cristiana* (A.M.C.). This Nicaraguan Christian nongovernmental organization has received U.S. foreign assistance through its partnerships with Church World Service and Foods Resource Bank. But this funding stream varies from year to year; currently A.M.C. receives no U.S. government assistance.

A.M.C. has been working in the Matagalpa region of central Nicaragua for many years and understands the needs in the area well. They began

by offering health care to families who live far from any medical facility. But when they realized that rural families lacked access to land to grow their crops—and needed to learn the best ways to farm—they expanded their focus.



An agricultural trainer shows off some of the worms that will be distributed to families around Matagalpa, Nicaragua.

Richard Leonard

The Granadas' *finca* is part of A.M.C.'s land bank project, which works with rural families to purchase plots of land. The family is buying their land directly from A.M.C., who are also teaching the Granadas better agricultural techniques.

That's where the worms come in.

Pedro proudly shows off foot-high sprouts of coffee plants that are boxed into a small plot of land just outside the family's house. He runs his fingers through the rich black soil, a stark contrast to the dusty ground surrounding this plot. He and Concepción are learning how to farm through *lombricultura* (vermiculture), using worms to produce organic fertilizer for their crops. A.M.C. provides them with "starter worms" that feed on manure from nearby goats, pigs, and pelibüey (a type of sheep). The worms, in turn, produce a rich organic matter that makes the coffee and other crops grow in this eroded area. This is especially important because natural disasters such as hurricanes and mudslides, along with deforestation for lumber and firewood for cooking, have devastated the topsoil in many parts of Nicaragua.

"*Acción* has been like a bridge for my family, to help us gain knowledge," Pedro says. "I didn't know about organic fertilizer. I didn't know the best ways to farm. I've grown maize and beans. Sometimes they would do well, sometimes not. I know more now, and I'm very grateful for what I've been taught."

The coffee plants need a few more years before they start producing income for the family. Right now, they're the equivalent of a college fund for his children, an investment in their future. In the meantime, the family needs to eat now. So the Granadas are also growing crops for their own consumption: yucca, bananas, plantains, tomatoes, green peppers, sugar cane, mangoes, and citrus fruits. But these are all in various growing stages right now, most not quite ready yet. Eventually the family will be able to diversify its diet, which makes for healthier children and parents.

For the moment the family still relies on rice and beans, the staples of any Nicaraguan diet. As with many staple items in diets around the world, the price of rice has tripled over the last year.

Besides working his own farm in the afternoon, Pedro works from early in the morning at a local plantation, picking the coffee beans in the fields. He makes 40 *cordobas* a day—about \$2.

Two dollars a day must provide for this family of five.

With rising food prices, the Granada family has had to cut back on how much they eat. If they run out of food entirely and anyone has to skip meals,



Pedro Granada and his daughter, Eloisa, tend to their coffee plants.

Richard Leonard

it's Concepción who does. And yet they express only gratitude for what *Acción* and funding from development assistance has been able to provide.

So Pedro and Concepción keep working their farm. They tend to their children, to the worms, to their coffee and other crops, looking to the future even as they struggle to live day to day.

## Building a Road and Following It

*U.S. development assistance should be flexible enough to address the multiple needs that arise when fighting poverty.*

ELDORET, KENYA — In Kenya, HIV-positive people are realizing something once they begin taking the anti-retroviral medications that save their lives: They're hungry.

People whose immune systems are severely compromised often lose their appetites. As they regain their strength, they regain their appetites. But in Kenya, all too often these people are the ones responsible for growing the food they and their families eat. Most likely they have been so sick they've had to neglect their crops. Then mothers and fathers find themselves without enough food to satisfy their own needs, much less the hunger of their children.

Doctors at the AMPATH Center quickly recognized this dilemma. AMPATH (Academic Model for Providing Access to Healthcare) is a system

of HIV/AIDS care and treatment centers in western Kenya. It grew out of a long-standing collaboration between Indiana University in the United States and Moi University in Kenya.

When the project started in 2001, it was treating 250 patients a year. In 2004, it began receiving U.S. development assistance through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Now AMPATH doctors are treating more than 70,000 patients a year, and hope to see that number grow to



Todd Post

AMPATH patients bring their prescriptions for food to be filled at the clinic.

150,000. Bread for the World members have worked to secure funding for PEPFAR since its inception.

When treating their patients, the doctors realized how important nutrition is to a comprehensive treatment plan. Good nutrition can delay the development of HIV into full-blown AIDS. But the food must be available and affordable. Too often it wasn't for AMPATH's patients. Some of the

doctors began buying food themselves to give to their patients. But of course, that's not a sustainable solution.

So they decided to incorporate nutrition prescriptions into their treatment. AMPATH staff members assess the nutritional status of every patient, along with their household food security (the food available for the patient and each family member). This latter point is crucial, as they discovered the futility in asking an HIV-positive mother to keep food for herself when faced with hungry children. When beginning treatment, patients receive food to feed themselves and their households—fruits, vegetables, beans, corn, oil, and sugar.

AMPATH recognized that providing food for their patients can also create an unhealthy dependency on their services. So they explored the next need: livelihood programs. As their strength returns, patients enroll in business or agricultural training. For example, AMPATH is training clients to grow passion fruits with the idea of setting up a factory to make passion fruit juice, a very popular treat in Kenya.

This stage of services is called the Family Preservation Initiative, because it's doing just that: keeping families together and helping them become self-sufficient. The majority of patients cared for by AMPATH are among the poorest in the world. Many of the patients have already lost their spouses to the disease. Though sick themselves, they are often solely responsible for caring for their own children as well as for orphaned children of family members. In the face of these needs, for AMPATH, comprehensive treatment must take on a whole new meaning and a sense of urgency.

But here's the snag: AMPATH has had to struggle to get the Family Preservation Initiative funded. PEPFAR is intended to fund prevention, treatment, and care for those suffering from HIV and AIDS; its focus is not on livelihood training programs. For instance, PEPFAR funds cannot purchase farming inputs like seeds or systems to help with irrigation. When farming input costs triple, as they have over the last year, the program runs up against severe shortages.

“We learned from our patients that drugs alone are not enough, just as food alone is not enough,” says Fran Quigley, a Bread for the World member from Indianapolis who works with AMPATH. “For many Kenyans, they need a hand-up, not a hand-out, to learn new skills or get some farm inputs or get started on a small business that will lead them to self-sufficiency.”

AMPATH has the right approach, what they describe as “building a road and following it.”



At the AMPATH Imani Workshop, a woman on anti-retroviral medication is now well enough to learn new livelihood skills.

Todd Post

“A holistic approach is essential to the overall success of this program,” says Steven Lewis, who created the initial AMPATH farms. “Not only are we providing people with drugs, which is one major component to actually bring them back up, they also then need school fees. They need food. They need income generation. They need to get their lives back up in order again. So, what we’re looking at is just building up their self-confidence and encouraging them to be self-reliant.”

When designed well, with more flexibility, development assistance from the United States can provide this holistic approach.

## Cheesemaking in Nicaragua, With Help from U.S. Foreign Assistance

*To benefit a country, development aid needs to be a reliable source of assistance, in partnership with recipient countries themselves.*



Richard Leonardt

Tall stalks of alfalfa grow on Nubia Baca's ranch, ready to be cut and fed to her dairy cattle.

CHINANDEGA, NICARAGUA — In northwest Nicaragua, about an hour's drive from the Honduran border, the country's tallest volcano, Volcán San Cristóbal, rises nearly 6,000 feet to form a perfect cone that regularly streams gray smoke into the air. At the volcano's base lie the pasturelands of another force of nature, rancher Nubia Baca.

This determined woman now owns 60 head of dairy cattle on her ranch on the outskirts of Chinandega. But two years ago, after her husband died, Nubia didn't know if she would even be able to keep her land, must less run a ranch. It was a smaller farm then, with fewer cows producing less milk each day.

“My husband didn't really think you needed to invest in the farm,” Nubia recalls. “He believed in the traditional ways, that cows could eat whatever's growing on the land.”

That meant the cows ate mainly the scrubby underbrush growing wild over much of the land. Now a vast field of alfalfa plants, tall and blooming with

golden flowers, has displaced that growth. Nearby is the Cameroon grass and sugar cane. This blend of proteins and carbohydrates is more nutritious for the cows. It's tastier, too, and yes, cows have taste preferences. Nubia's cows are healthier and producing more milk than ever.

She learned these techniques from agricultural trainers working for *Cuenta Reto del Milenio*, Nicaragua's arm of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The MCC is a relatively new U.S. development assistance program. Bread for the World members worked to establish the program through the 2003 Offering of Letters.

With multiple year compacts, the MCC intends to provide a steady source of funding for countries committed to good governance, economic freedom, and investments in people. This differs from other U.S. aid programs, which can only commit funding for one year at a time. MCC-country programs like *Cuenta* can count on the money being there and plan accordingly.

Besides the training, *Cuenta* has provided Nubia with 30 percent of the funding to run her ranch for the past two years. She learned about the program through her involvement with *Consejo de Mujeres* (Council of Women), a local collection of women's groups. As the MCC first explored what needed to be done in Nicaragua, they consulted with this group for input from the area's women. Their feedback led to significant improvements in the project. *Cuenta* hired a gender specialist, Sylvia Torres, to focus specifically on the needs of women and the best ways to work with them, especially to establish small business ventures and agricultural cooperatives.

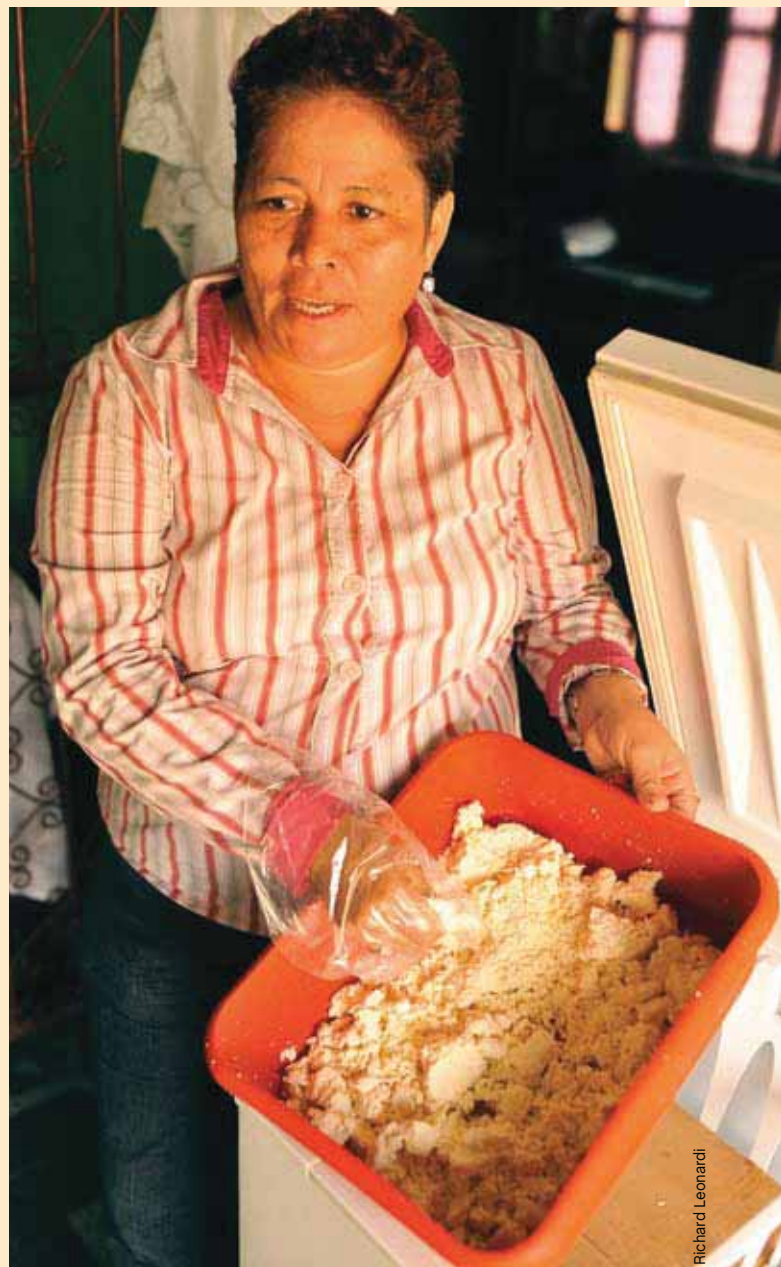
Nubia learned quickly. Initially she only sold milk straight from the ranch. As her cows' milk production increased, she realized she could earn more if she used some of the milk to make cheese and *leche agria* (sour milk similar to sour cream), popular in Nicaragua. So *Cuenta* helped her purchase large metal milk canisters and a refrigerator for her house, where her cheese-making venture is centered. From 50 liters of milk, she gets about 30 pounds of cheese. In the verdant rainy season, her cows can produce 1,000 liters of milk every day.

The community now knows that Nubia sells dairy products from her home. Some days the line is down the block. She's also providing employment for others. Six men work for her at the ranch; three women help with the cheese-making.

While she's proud of her work, she wishes she'd discovered the possibilities years earlier. Both her children have left Nicaragua to live in other countries, her son in the United States and her daughter in Spain. They believed that the lack of job and economic opportunities meant they couldn't afford to stay and raise families in Chinandega. But Nubia holds out hope that they might return and take over the ranch as she ages.

Seeing what she's been able to accomplish, she thinks it might work better under her daughter.

"I named (the ranch) *Deysi*, which is also my daughter's name. Maybe it's meant to be hers," Nubia says with a smile.



With U.S. development assistance, Nubia purchased a refrigerator to store the cheese she makes at her home.

Richard Leonard

# Questions & Answers

## What, exactly, is foreign assistance?

Foreign assistance or foreign aid refers to the funding the United States provides to other countries for a wide variety of reasons. Sometimes foreign assistance is given directly to a country's government either in cash or "in-kind," meaning physical items such as tents, food, or weapons. But U.S. development assistance is predominantly delivered by nongovernmental organizations directly to local communities to address their needs and support their development efforts.

Since 2001, Bread for the World has used the term poverty-focused development assistance to identify foreign assistance that directly affects the lives of hungry and poor people and distinguish it from aid given for military, economic, or political reasons. In 2007, just over 40 percent of total U.S. foreign assistance went to programs that work in poor communities to immunize children, train teachers, build water wells, schools, and rural roads, and provide agricultural training to help farmers increase their productivity. These poverty-focused development programs respond directly to the needs of poor people and are usually delivered by trusted providers such as Church World Service, Catholic Relief Services, or World Vision. Communities receiving the assistance frequently provide input on the design of these programs.

## Does foreign assistance really work? What about people who say aid is not the solution to poverty?

U.S. poverty-focused development assistance improves the lives of millions of people around the world. With U.S. funding, nongovernmental organizations, including many faith-based groups, have helped get millions of children in school, mothers to immunize their babies in newly built health facilities, and farmers learn new strategies to improve their crops. More children are living to see their fifth birthday; deaths from measles and tuberculosis are declining. In the past six years, the number of people receiving anti-retroviral medicines to treat HIV/AIDS in developing countries has increased tenfold to almost 3 million people. Since 1990, more than a billion people have gained access to clean water. When targeted and given the proper resources, aid *can* work.

However, foreign aid, even poverty-focused development assistance, cannot solve the world's development problems alone. Countries and communities face crushing debt burdens, unfair trade rules, poor governance, and disruptive conflicts as they try to improve the well-being of their citizens. U.S. development policy cannot be only about aid, but must also address these other constraints to economic growth and improved living standards. Currently these decisions are scattered across 12 departments, 25 agencies, and nearly 60 offices in the U.S. government, making a holistic plan for development nearly impossible.



Richard Leonard

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## Given the state of our own economy, shouldn't we address the problems of people hurting here at home rather than focusing overseas?

There's no question: Economic turmoil has increased hunger and poverty in our country. In tough times, we must help people suffering in our own country. Yet as difficult as these problems are, on sheer scale, poor people in developing countries are suffering even greater levels of poverty and hunger.

Foreign aid reform means that resources will be better spent, with more coordination, greater accountability, and a strategy that directly addresses the key challenges the world faces today. A streamlined process will increase the value, impact, and transparency of U.S. international development investments. Better foreign assistance also means less waste and better value at a time when our government leaders must make hard economic choices.

Reforming foreign assistance is also in our nation's interest. In our increasingly interconnected world, investments in global development increase security and prosperity here in the United States. Effective foreign assistance creates more stability and lasting solutions to the difficult problems our world faces. Investments in programs that improve the lives of hungry and poor people in developing countries lay the foundation for future generations to live in a more peaceful and prosperous world.

A big risk in our current economic turmoil is that it will provoke spiritual contraction. We are all tempted to become anxious and pull back from generosity. Yet, the antidote to spiritual contraction is to be reminded of the constant goodness and mercy of God.

## What is the connection between reforming foreign assistance and meeting the Millennium Development Goals?

Eradicating poverty and hunger requires a concentrated effort with clear, measurable goals. But our current system of providing foreign assistance is outdated, complicated, and underfunded. It lacks accountability to both American taxpayers and the people it seeks to serve. The Foreign Assistance Act, the 1961 legislation that governs U.S. foreign assistance, has at least 33 different goals, 75 priority areas, and 247 directives, which sometimes conflict with each other. With such diffuse efforts, making progress on international poverty as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals is incredibly difficult.

We need to strengthen our development efforts and make them an equal pillar—alongside diplomacy and defense in U.S. foreign policy. Americans can build goodwill, express compassion, and create a more secure world by giving a hand to those who struggle to lift themselves out of poverty.



Todd Post

# Hunger & Poverty Facts

## Our world faces many serious challenges.

- Globally, there are 1.4 billion people living on less than \$1.25 a day.
- As a result of rising food prices, the number of hungry people has increased by 115 million, for a total of 963 million people worldwide.
- Nearly 1 billion people still lack access to safe sources of drinking water.



- Every day, 26,000 children under the age of 5 die from preventable causes such as undernutrition, diarrhea, unsafe water, or diseases that are easily prevented by vaccines. That's 18 children every minute.

## But important progress has been made against poverty.

- In Ghana, almost 30 percent of children under five were malnourished in 1993. In 2006, this number has dropped down to 17 percent.
- With improved routine vaccinations, global deaths from measles fell by more than two-thirds since 1990. In sub-Saharan Africa, deaths from measles fell by more than 91 percent.
- Sub-Saharan African countries enrolled an additional 29 million children in primary school between 1995 and 2005, thanks in large part to debt-relief efforts.

## The United States successfully addresses many challenges of global poverty. But the manner in which assistance is delivered too often impedes progress on behalf of the world's poor people.

- The United States spends just \$1 out of every \$16 of foreign assistance on the world's 10 poorest countries—places like Sierra Leone, Niger, and Malawi.
- The U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, passed in 1961, now encompasses 33 different goals, 75 priority areas, and 247 directives and is executed by at least 12 departments, 25 different agencies, and almost 60 government offices.
- The United States ties approximately 95 percent of its foreign aid to

purchases of U.S. goods and services. It is estimated that this practice decreases its effectiveness in making actual reductions in poverty by 15-30 percent.

- In 1960, the average recipient country had to deal with about a dozen donors, compared with more than 30 today. Some recipient countries receive as many as 800 new projects a year, host more than 1,000 donor missions, and must submit 2,400 quarterly progress reports.

## The United States can, and should, do better in meeting the needs of our world's hungry and poor people.

Sources: The World Bank; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Center for Global Development; U.S. Government Accountability Office; "Changing aid landscape," Stefano Curto, *Finance and Development* 44, no. 4, December 2007; *State of the World's Children 2008*; *Data Report 2008*.

# What Can I Do?

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Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-NE) meets with Bread members during the 2008 Lobby Day.

“As people of faith we are called to show compassion, love kindness, and do justice. When we doubt our place in the political process, we need only recall the words of Jesus appealing to people to care for the common good. Bread for the World’s 2009 Offering of Letters makes a similar appeal to our nation’s leaders, encouraging them to focus our foreign assistance programs on overcoming hunger and poverty around the world.”

– Rev. John H. Thomas  
General Minister and President  
United Church of Christ

# Planning An Offering Of Letters

Every year, churches and campus groups across the United States send handwritten letters to their members of Congress. Writing a heartfelt letter is a prayerful, reflective and personal way to seek God's justice for hungry people. When we join with our congregations or campus communities, we raise a strong voice.

Members of Congress receive thousands of emails per week, but handwritten letters are unique. They virtually guarantee that your senators or representative will take note of your opinion. Even a few handwritten letters can influence his or her actions and votes.

## Here are 10 easy steps to organize an Offering of Letters:



Brian Duss

**1 Pray for the Offering.** Reflect on the Scripture's call to bring justice to poor and oppressed people. Prayerfully ask God to show you how to interpret this call.

**2 Create Your Team.** Consider who might be helpful in planning and publicizing an Offering of Letters: Your pastor? Christian education director? Social concerns or mission committee? Youth group leader? Invite them to join your team.

**3 Gather Resources.** Read this handbook thoroughly for information and ideas, and watch the accompanying DVD. Then see what other resources are available through your denomination. Check in with your Bread regional organizer. Visit [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009) for updates and the most recent sample letter.

**4 Develop a Plan.** Arrange a meeting with your team to review resources. Consider how to integrate the Offering of Letters with worship and educational activities. Decide when and where to hold your Offering of Letters. Keep your pastor informed and ask for his or her support. Involve others through creative activities (see page 24 for ideas).

**5 Get the Word Out.** Ask your pastor to lift up the Offering of Letters in a sermon. (A Biblical basis for the Offering can be found on page 26.) Write an article on the Offering of Letters for the church newsletter. Place a bulletin insert or announcement in the Sunday bulletin. Offer a "Minute for Mission" during worship. Encourage others to spread the word at their small group or Bible study meetings. Display the poster found in the pocket of this handbook on a bulletin board with the Offering date and time.

**6**

**Conduct and Bless the Offering.** Letter-writing can be done at a special time during worship, in the pews or narthex after the service, at fellowship hour, in a class or youth group, near dining halls, or anywhere people gather. Have available paper, envelopes, pens and the latest sample letter (found at [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009)). Show the Offering of Letters DVD so people can see a family who could be helped by their letters. Invite anyone who prefers not to write to pray for hungry people affected by this legislation. And remember that letter-writing at home yields fewer letters. Encourage letter writers to fill out the sign-in sheet (found in this handbook's pocket) so they can request a one-year free membership to Bread for the World.

**7**

**Gather the Letters.** Offer the letters up to God for a blessing during worship. Count and note the number of letters written to each member of Congress. Stamp and mail each letter individually; do not bundle them in one envelope. Complete and return the feedback form, found as a tear-out in the back of this handbook or online at [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009), to Bread for the World's national office. Your report ensures that Bread's staff can follow up effectively with congressional offices.

**8**

**Give Thanks.** To God, to your team, to your letter-writers, and to those who prayed.

**9**

**Follow Up.** Consider how to let people know about the fruits of their labor. Will you publish monthly updates on the legislation in your church or campus newsletter or on your Web site? Have the letter-writers signed up to receive updates from Bread for the World on the legislation? Remember that progress typically comes in small steps.

**10**

**Celebrate victories, large and small.**

"As a nation, we have been richly blessed. But we haven't done a very good job of figuring out how to effectively share our blessings with others around the world. Our international assistance programs need to be refocused on the needs of the poor. I urge concerned Christians to make their voices heard through Bread for the World's 2009 Offering of Letters."

– Robert N. Nash, Jr.  
Coordinator for Global Mission  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship



Margaret W. Nea

**Don't forget to complete and return your feedback form or fill it out online!**

# How to Use the Offering of Letters DVD

The 2009 Offering of Letters DVD contains: the 2009 Offering video (approximately 8 minutes); “We Are Bread for the World” (1- and 7-minute versions); and a sermon by Rev. David Beckmann (2 minutes). The DVD is available in English and Spanish.

## The Offering of Letters DVD is a great resource for many settings:

- Show it during a class at church or on campus, especially one that deals with hunger and justice or global poverty and development issues.
- Use a portion of the video (choose the Nicaragua or Kenya sections) to illustrate specific points or draw reactions from those watching. Have a discussion about them with children, youth, or adults.
- Project the 1-minute version of “We Are Bread for the World” on screens during the worship service to introduce Bread just before you explain what the Offering will be about.
- Play the Offering of Letters video during the coffee hour or other gathering times for several weeks before your Offering. Then have it running near the letter-writing tables on the day of the Offering for those who have not yet seen it.
- If your campus or retirement community has a television station, arrange to show the video during a “hunger and justice” focused segment.
- Link your church’s Web site to [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009) so visitors can view the video and other Offering of Letters resources online.
- Order the Spanish language version of the DVD and use it during outreach events in your community where you can have a letter-writing table set up.



“There is no doubt: The United States and the rest of the world are facing some unusual economic challenges that will require us to examine new ways of how we take care of those we call the least, the lost, and the left out. By supporting Bread for the World’s 2009 Offering of Letters campaign, we can use a logical, commonsense approach to how we address U.S. foreign assistance by being good stewards of our resources and saving more lives in the process. That is a win-win situation for everybody.”

– Bishop William H. Graves  
Senior Bishop and CEO  
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

# Sample Presentation

Imagine—or remember—a world where a first-class stamp costs four cents. John F. Kennedy has just been inaugurated as president, the Berlin Wall has just been built, and a gallon of gas costs 27 cents.

That's the way the world was in 1961.

Today a stamp costs 42 cents and gas costs a little bit more than 27 cents a gallon. The Berlin Wall fell 20 years ago. And we just inaugurated the first African-American president.

## The world has changed.

As Christians and Americans we believe it's the right thing to do to help hungry and poor people around our world. But we're operating within a system created nearly 50 years ago.

We need to bring our country's foreign aid system into the 21st century. Bread for the World's 2009 Offering of Letters is asking our members of Congress to make foreign assistance more effective in reducing hunger and poverty in today's world. We need a better coordinated, more efficient approach to providing aid. Fixing foreign aid will allow the money we spend to go further and help the people who need it the most.

We are urging Congress to make poverty reduction a primary goal of our foreign assistance, and elevate global development as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy alongside defense and diplomacy.

## Development works. But we can make it work even better.

Today, children avoid contracting life-threatening malaria because they have received bed nets that protect them from mosquito bites.

Today, people with HIV and AIDS receive life-saving medication and are able to live productive lives and raise their children.

Today, farmers are learning modern skills to allow them to increase their yields and supplement their incomes to become self-reliant.

As Christians, we know that peace is more than the absence of war. It requires building strong, healthy relationships, supporting people and communities working hard to provide a better life for their children, and removing the barriers to human dignity and fulfillment. That's the work of U.S. foreign assistance and the goal of global development. That's our opportunity and our challenge.



# Writing Letters To Congress

## The Two-Minute Letter

An effective letter to Congress needs three things:

**1. Put your name and address at the end of your letter**

**AND on the envelope**, so your members of Congress know that you are one of the people they represent.

**2. Ask for specific action**, using the sentence below or your own words:

Please work to bring U.S. foreign assistance up to date and ensure that development is elevated as a national priority, alongside defense and diplomacy, in our foreign policy.

**3. Give reasons why.** Examples are:

- U.S. foreign assistance is governed by a law signed by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. With a new president and new Congress, this is an important opportunity to modernize and improve foreign aid.
- Many development assistance programs already make a difference. But the large number of federal agencies and offices involved in distributing aid demands a more coordinated system.
- As a global leader, the United States must elevate development within our foreign policy to help create a better, safer world.

### Sample Letter

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Rep. \_\_\_\_\_ or Dear Sen. \_\_\_\_\_,

I'm asking that you make something our nation has been doing well even better.

Aid from the United States already helps low-income nations reduce hunger and poverty. But our nation's foreign assistance programs are seriously outdated and need to be better coordinated in order to be more effective. It is time for Congress to look at making poverty reduction a primary goal of foreign assistance.

Please work to bring U.S. foreign assistance up to date and ensure that development is elevated as a national priority, alongside defense and diplomacy, in our foreign policy. This will ensure more economic opportunities in low-income countries and help poor people lift themselves out of hunger and poverty.

Sincerely,  
Your Name  
Your Address

**4. Send your letter to Congress.**

Put each letter in a separate envelope and address it.

Send your letter to:

Sen. \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510

Rep. \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

PLEASE NOTE: Most recent sample letters are always available online at [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009). Please visit that site before holding your Offering of Letters.

Due to security procedures, your letter may take two to four weeks to get to Congress, but that's okay. It will make an important difference for people who are hungry and poor throughout our world.

# Contact Bread's Regional Organizers

As the time approaches to write your letters, please contact your Bread for the World organizer for an update on the legislation and the latest sample letter, or visit [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009).

## Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, RI, VT)

475 Riverside Dr., Rm. 1926, New York, NY 10115  
Phone: (212) 870-2329 • Toll-Free: 1-866-238-0507  
Email: [northeast@bread.org](mailto:northeast@bread.org)

## Southeast (AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC)

100 Edgewood Ave NE, Suite 940, Atlanta, GA 30303  
Phone: (404) 827-0105 • Toll-Free: 1-888-BFW-0073  
Email: [breadsouth@bread.org](mailto:breadsouth@bread.org)

## Central & Mid-Atlantic (DC, DE, KS, MD, NE, TN, VA)

50 F Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: (202) 639-9400 • Toll-Free: 1-800-82-BREAD  
Email: [breadcentral@bread.org](mailto:breadcentral@bread.org)

## North Central (KY, MI, OH, PA, WV)

601 W. Riverview Ave., Dayton, OH 45406  
Phone: (937) 227-9450 • Toll-Free: 1-800-619-9BFW  
Email: [north.central@bread.org](mailto:north.central@bread.org)

## Illinois, Indiana & Missouri (IL, IN, MO)

205 W. Monroe, Suite 311, Chicago, IL 60606  
Phone: (312) 629-9529 • Toll-Free: 1-800-447-0BFW  
Email: [breadchicago@bread.org](mailto:breadchicago@bread.org)

## Upper Midwest (IA, MN, ND, SD, WI)

122 W. Franklin Ave., Rm. 610, Minneapolis, MN 55404  
Phone: (612) 871-9084 • Toll-Free: 1-800-363-7BFW  
Email: [breadmnmn@bread.org](mailto:breadmnmn@bread.org)

## Central Southern (OK, TX, AR)

221 East 9th St, Suite 403, Austin, TX 78701  
Phone: (512) 474-2417 • Toll-Free: 1-888-257-0BFW  
Email: [breaddtx@bread.org](mailto:breaddtx@bread.org)

## Western (AK, AZ, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, WA, UT, WY)

0245 SW Bancroft St., Suite B, Portland, OR 97239  
Phone: (503) 922-2182 • Toll-Free: 1-888-75-BREAD  
Email: [breadwest@bread.org](mailto:breadwest@bread.org)

## California (CA)

155 South El Molino Ave., Suite 101, Pasadena, CA 91101  
Phone: (626) 568-3233 • Toll-Free: 1-800-315-3BFW  
Email: [breadca@bread.org](mailto:breadca@bread.org)

## Organizer for Latino Relations

155 South El Molino Ave., Suite 101, Pasadena, CA 91101  
Phone: (626) 568-3233 • Toll-Free: 1-800-315-3BFW  
Email: [pan@bread.org](mailto:pan@bread.org)



# Activities that Educate

Here are three activities that will help educate your church or group on the issues covered by the 2009 Offering of Letters.

## Adult Bible Study

Jesus often spoke in parables to point toward the realities of God’s coming kingdom and to illustrate how his followers should live. These seemingly simple stories are powerful because they use ordinary images and experiences to stir the moral imagination. They give us new eyes to see the world.

Sowing and reaping were common themes in Jesus’ teaching. In fact, we find the “Parable of the Sower” recorded in three Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Just as Jesus sowed seeds of the kingdom in word and deed, he calls us to be sowers of goodness, peace, and hope. Explore together how this parable might speak to the need for reforming U.S. foreign assistance in order to more effectively reduce hunger and poverty around the world.

### Read Mark 4:2-9

**Opening Questions:** God promises that we will reap whatever we sow (Galatians 6:7). What good seeds has our country sown around the world? What bad seeds? How might this parable invite us to re-imagine how we as a nation sow our resources in places parched by poverty and hunger?

**FOCUS:** *Some seed fell on the path and the birds came and ate it up (v. 3).*

**Thought:** Rising food and fuel prices are dramatically eating away at the ability of poor families around the world to feed their children. Diplomacy and defense make up the major part of our spending in foreign countries.

**Reflection Question:** What distractions rob us of seeing and responding to the suffering of others?

**FOCUS:** *Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil...and when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away (vv. 5-6).*

**Thought:** Long-term development goals to improve agriculture, health, and education are often overshadowed by emergency needs or pushed aside for short-term political or military priorities.

**Reflection Questions:** What do you think is needed to bring about sustainable, lasting progress in the fight against hunger and poverty both at home and abroad? Why is this important from a Christian perspective?

**FOCUS:** *Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain (v. 7).*

**Thought:** Currently U.S. development policies and programs are entangled within 12 departments, 25 agencies, and nearly 60 government offices. The opportunity exists to clear away the underbrush that impedes the efforts of poor people to lift themselves out of hunger and poverty.



Günter Gumi

**Reflection Questions:** What examples can you point to in your own life of good intentions that were crowded out by chaos or competing interests? How can we practice good stewardship as a nation?

**FOCUS:** *Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain...yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold (v.8).*

**Thought:** U.S. assistance has helped to reduce child deaths, increase school enrollment, curtail AIDS, and create economic opportunities in poor parts of the world. But U.S. assistance could be much more effective.

**Reflection Questions:** Describe what “abundant life” means to you. How would the world be different if more people enjoyed the fruits of God’s good creation? What are ways that we can enable God’s abundance to flourish among people burdened by hunger and poverty?

■ To help your group understand the complexities and challenges poor countries face as they try to foster good development and work with well-intentioned donor countries, use one of these two activities:

## The Foreign Assistance Maze

Make copies of the Foreign Assistance chart from the handbook pocket (on the back side of the Development Happens game). Ask your group to work in pairs to answer these questions:

- What is your first impression looking at this chart?
- With your finger, see if you can trace the path of a particular development project from its starting point to its final destination. How difficult was it? Can you think of a simpler path from beginning to end for that particular project?
- What do you believe is the connection between this chart and the goals of this year’s Offering of Letters campaign?

## Development Happens Game

With copies made ahead of time of the Development Happens game board (found in the handbook pocket), divide into groups of no more than four people. Each group will need a game board, a die, and four game pieces to represent four countries (the game pieces could simply be four small squares of paper in different colors). Instruct people to take turns rolling the die and moving their countries around the board until one country has achieved good development.

After the groups have played the game, help them process it with these questions:

- What obstacles or challenges did your country encounter as it worked to end hunger and poverty?
- Some countries seemed to progress fairly easily. Why? Were these factors always fair?
- How could U.S. foreign assistance be improved to better assist countries trying to foster good development?



Richard Leonard



### Helping Hungry People: A Sunday School Curriculum

This new curriculum teaches elementary-age students about the Christian call to help people in need. Children will study places where people live in poverty and the teachings of Jesus. They will also engage in a variety of efforts to help hungry people.

The curriculum complements Bread for the World’s Offering of Letters. Children will write letters to their member of Congress.

**Download the curriculum at  
[bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009)**



## Sharing Abundance

2 Corinthians 9

In the middle of the first century, famine spread throughout Judea. The Apostle Paul devoted much time and energy to organizing an early “foreign assistance” program, gathering funds from Gentile churches in Asia Minor to share with those suffering in Judea.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul seeks to repair his estranged relationship with the fractious community in Corinth. He commends his ministry to the Corinthians, “boasting” only in “the generous act of Jesus Christ, that though he was rich he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

That generous act of reconciliation is the wellspring for the generosity Paul urges on his readers in Chapter 9. Paul wishes to boast about their generosity as a way to encourage other churches to contribute to this collection. Likewise our own nation’s leadership in reducing global hunger and poverty will encourage other countries to do more as well. Paul offers other insights and encouragement as we urge our nation’s decision makers to improve foreign assistance:

**1. Paul wasn’t looking for a hand-out.** The collection wasn’t about charity. Rather, he urges equity or what he terms “a fair balance between your present abundance and their need.” Your letters to

Congress aim at rethinking how foreign assistance is carried out to provide people in developing nations with the resources they need to create a better future for themselves.

**2. This “balancing”—this transfer of resources—is made out of abundance that is a gift from God.** “And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work” (9:8). God blesses us with abundance so that it can be shared with those in need.

**3. In the ancient Near Eastern world, Paul’s collection establishes a client-patron relationship between the church in Judea and the churches in Asia Minor.** This is not an attempt to make one church subservient, but rather to build partnership. When our nation’s foreign assistance programs aim to create lasting relationships and working partnerships with developing countries—that will bring about real change.

**4. Finally, this early famine relief program encourages us to take on the messy work of changing laws and policies.** Paul’s collection was a major undertaking, requiring efficient organization and large-scale cooperation. As you read 2 Corinthians, you can tell that fierce negotiations and less-than-perfect compromises were involved. Changing U.S. foreign assistance will be complex, but seeing it through will produce big benefits for hungry people.

As we take on the challenge of reforming U.S. foreign assistance, Paul’s words to the Corinthians give us boldness and confidence: “Therefore, since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart” (2 Corinthians 4:1). To change foreign assistance will surely require courage and determination. May we be inspired by Paul and other early Christians who, out of generosity, used God’s gift of abundance to create hope and opportunity for those in need.

# Worship Aids

## Prayer of Dedication for Letters

O Lord God, we lift up these letters before you and ask your blessing on the words we have written to our elected officials. Grant courage and wisdom to our nation's leaders as they work to create hope and opportunity for those who live in hunger and poverty. Sustain us by your Spirit, and show us the joy of sharing the bounty of your creation with all those in need. In Christ Jesus we pray, Amen.

## Litany for an Offering of Letters

**Leader:** For the gift of reconciliation through your Son Jesus Christ, who for our sake became poor that we might be rich in your grace,

**All:** We give you thanks, O Lord.

**Leader:** For the bounty of your creation which sustains our daily lives,

**All:** We praise you, O God.

**Leader:** For the abundant blessings you shower on us so that we might experience the joy of sharing our resources with others,

**All:** We ask your guidance and pray for a generous heart, O Lord.

**Leader:** For the gift of citizenship that enables us to use our votes and our voices to influence the policies and practices of our government,

**All:** We pray for wisdom and persistence as we use this gift, O God.

**Leader:** That our new president and the new Congress might make our country a beacon of compassion and goodwill around the world,

**All:** Grant them compassion and courage, O Lord.

**Leader:** That our nation might always work to build partnerships that provide dignity and opportunity to those in need, so that people everywhere might be able to feed themselves and their families,

**All:** Grant us your vision, O God.

**Leader:** That those who live and work in the world's poorest countries might continue to improve their governments, provide education for their children, and support farmers,

**All:** May hope and opportunity be theirs, O Lord.

**Leader:** That our government, with all of its policies and laws, might be an instrument to bring change and a benefit to the least among us,

**All:** Give us patience, O God, so that we do not lose heart.

**Leader:** That through your Spirit we might grow in grace and love, to live all of our days in joy and hope.

**All:** Send us out into your world, O Lord. Amen.



“With an estimated 963 million people suffering from hunger worldwide, the immediate attention of the churches is critically needed. I implore American Christians to ‘give us this day’ by sending letters to members of Congress asking them to focus our foreign assistance programs on efforts to overcome hunger and poverty.”

– Rev. Dr. Bernice Powell Jackson  
President for North America  
World Council of Churches

# Reaching Out to Your Church or Campus

**Pray and fast to be in spiritual solidarity with hungry and poor people.** Allow God’s Spirit to guide us to order our lives and actions for justice toward all our brothers and sisters who are living in poverty.

**Attend a local Offering of Letters workshop** to learn about the 2009 Offering of Letters campaign and how to organize an offering. Check Bread’s events calendar for workshop dates and locations at [bread.org/events](http://bread.org/events) or contact your Bread regional office for help (see page 23 for contact information). Most workshops happen from January to June. If you cannot be present at a local event, ask your organizer about options for attending a “virtual” workshop online.

**Organize an Offering of Letters** in your congregation or on campus. Invite people to take part in this proven way of engaging people in faith-based advocacy for hungry people.

**Find out what initiatives your denomination may have** that can help your congregation understand and relate to the Offering of Letters.



Jay Mallin

## What More Can You Do?

“We have heard much lately about hope and change. We need to join our voices and our influence to encourage one another and our new national leadership to work for systemic changes in the way we conduct our foreign policy that will lead to an end to poverty and hunger.”

– Sister J. Lora Dambroski  
USA Provincial Minister,  
Sisters of St. Francis of the  
Providence of God;  
President,  
Leadership Council  
of Women Religious

- **Use Bread for the World’s Offering of Letters Web site, [bread.org/OL2009](http://bread.org/OL2009),** as an on-going resource during the year. It will contain the most recent campaign updates, sample letters, and aids for further education and action around the Offering of Letters.
- **Join Bread for the World at our Gathering 2009 and Lobby Day** in Washington, DC, June 14-16. Bread members from around the country gather in the nation’s capital to speak to their members of Congress directly on the Offering of Letters issue. Special scholarships will be available for young hunger advocates!
- **Organize a local visit with your members of Congress.** Most are regularly in their home states and districts, particularly around congressional recesses. Recruit Bread members, faith and campus leaders to take part in the visit. If the member is not available, request a conference call with the congressional staff in Washington that handles foreign affairs. Some offices even have teleconference capabilities to include more members of your group.

- **Join Bread's Quicklines.** Learn when to make urgent calls to your member of Congress. The alerts will give you clear background information on the issue at hand and a short, easily understandable message to convey to your senator or representative. Sign up online to receive alerts at [bread.org/quicklines](http://bread.org/quicklines).
- **Write a letter to the editor** or an op-ed in your local newspaper about why your members of Congress should support hunger-fighting initiatives. See [bread.org/local-media](http://bread.org/local-media).
- **Join or start a local Bread or campus group.** Invite others to meet, study the issues, take action, and advance anti-hunger advocacy. Or, if you belong to a prayer or Bible study group at your church or campus, brief them regularly on Bread's efforts.
- **Read the Bread Blog** for stimulating points of view and innovative ideas. Post your own comments to share with others about what your congregation or campus group is doing. Find it at [bread.org/blog](http://bread.org/blog).
- **Invite speakers to your church or campus group**, such as missionaries and Peace Corps volunteers, who can talk first-hand about hunger and poverty in Africa, Latin America, or Asia, and "put a face" on hunger.

For questions or advice about these and other suggestions, contact your regional Bread for the World office or call our national office at 1-800-82-BREAD.

"Many of us pray that our country will be a light to other nations, using our God-given blessings to bless others. Refocusing U.S. foreign assistance to create a coordinated and streamlined effort to reduce poverty would be the beginning of an answer to those prayers. By participating in Bread for the World's 2009 Offering of Letters, we can use the gift of our citizenship to bless those most in need around the world."

– Rev. Dr. Sam Dixon  
Deputy General Secretary  
United Methodist Committee on  
Relief (UMCOR)

## Church Leaders: Become more involved with Bread for the World

- **Become a Bread Covenant Church:** You can strengthen your church's hunger ministry through a Covenant Church relationship with Bread for the World. When you make a commitment to integrate hunger concerns into the life of your congregation, Bread for the World provides tools that will equip your church to learn more about hunger, pray for hungry people, and take action to end hunger through advocacy.
- **Bread for the World Sunday** is an annual opportunity for your church or campus to renew its commitment to overcoming hunger and poverty in God's world. On Sundays in the fall, worshipping communities across the country join together in lifting up their voices on behalf of hungry people.
- **Bread for the Preacher:** Bread for the World has launched a new email newsletter geared to pastors and church leaders. Each monthly edition features preaching aids and worship resources surrounding issues of hunger and poverty. Sign up at [bread.org/preacher](http://bread.org/preacher).

You can find out more about all of these events and resources at [bread.org](http://bread.org).



Margaret W. Nea

# Gathering 2009: Join Us!

## Save the date for this year's events!

Bread for the World's Gathering 2009 will be June 14-15 at American University in Washington, DC. Lobby Day will be Tuesday, June 16.



Robin Holland

- Learn from Bread for the World leaders and organizers, and other seasoned practitioners, effective ways to urge our nation's decision makers to end hunger and poverty.
- Connect with other leaders from across the United States who are committed to ending hunger and poverty.
- Learn how to build a constituency to end hunger in your church and community, or on your university or seminary campus.
- Visit your senators' and representative's offices on Capitol Hill to speak out for hungry people on Lobby Day.
  - Return home with the relationships, strategies, and support you'll need to develop and lead advocacy efforts in your community, church, or campus.

Bread for the World's 35th Anniversary Dinner will be held Monday, June 15. Featured speaker is Bill Moyers (pictured above with Bread for the World President David Beckmann), veteran journalist and host of the PBS news show, "Bill Moyers Journal."

## Join us!

Watch for further information on [bread.org](http://bread.org) as it becomes available.



Jay Malin

"We are celebrating 2,000 years of the birth of Saint Paul, a man who met with Christ and with the Christians. In them, he found many blessings and many needs. His faith led him to preach the gospel of salvation, and also to worry about the material needs of poor Christians. As Latinos, we know well what it means to grow up in countries in need. That is why we join with Bread for the World's 2009 Offering of Letters. With our help and advocacy, we hope the U.S. government will improve its positive influence on the transformation of the world, to be a blessing for all."

— Rev. Juan Luis Calderón, OAR  
Assistant Director of Centro Guadalupe  
Catholic Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

# Your Offering Feedback

## Send Us Your Feedback and Receive a Free Offering of Letters Kit Next Year

Your feedback on the 2009 Offering of Letters is very important. We will use it to follow up with your members of Congress, conduct media work, and measure the impact of this campaign. Please complete this form, fold, seal, stamp, and mail it. You can save a stamp by completing the online form at [www.bread.org/OL2009](http://www.bread.org/OL2009) or by calling 1-800-82-BREAD. Thank you!

### My Offering of Letters

I conducted an Offering of Letters on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of church, campus, or group \_\_\_\_\_

Address of church, campus, or group \_\_\_\_\_

My church's, campus', or group's religious affiliation (if any) is \_\_\_\_\_

My church's, campus', or group's racial/ethnic composition is \_\_\_\_\_

This is my first Offering of Letter (check one)  Yes  No, I have conducted \_\_\_\_\_ (number) in the past.

My Offering of Letters was attended by \_\_\_\_\_ participants (number). We generated \_\_\_\_\_ letters (number).

Indicate the number of letters sent to: Sen. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of letters \_\_\_\_\_

*If necessary, add others on reverse side.* Sen. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of letters \_\_\_\_\_

Rep. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of letters \_\_\_\_\_

Rep. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of letters \_\_\_\_\_

I already submitted my Offering of Letters sign-up sheet:  Yes  No. (Sign-ups will receive Bread memberships.)

### The 2009 Offering of Letters Kit

The Offering materials were written in a clear, understandable way  Yes  No. They can be improved by \_\_\_\_\_

In general, the kit provided me with all the materials I needed to conduct an Offering of Letters  Yes  No

Based on the table of contents, the *most* useful section(s) of this kit is (list and explain why): \_\_\_\_\_

Based on the table of contents, the *least* useful section(s) of this kit is (list and explain why): \_\_\_\_\_

I showed the Offering of Letters DVD  Yes  No, because \_\_\_\_\_

I showed the 'We Are Bread for the World' video  Yes (  1-minute,  7-minute )  No

I showed the 2-minute sermon by Rev. David Beckmann  Yes  No

I used the 2009 Offering of Letters Interactive Web site to get additional resources to plan and conduct my Offering of Letters  Yes  No

In the future, I intend to use ONLY the online version of the Offering of Letters kit for my Offering  Yes  No

This is how you can improve future Offerings of Letters: \_\_\_\_\_

Please cut out and mail to Bread for the World

# Information About You

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State ZIP

PHONE (HOME) \_\_\_\_\_ (WORK) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank You!**

Stamp

BREAD FOR THE WORLD  
ATTN: ORGANIZING DEPARTMENT  
50 F Street NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20001

Please use the space below for additional comments or suggestions.

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